LIBRARY

BOROUGH OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1950

R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

BOROUGH OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1950

Health Department,
Albert Street,
Bridgwater.

August, 1951.

TO:
The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Bridgwater

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my Annual Report for the year 1950, which has been prepared on the lines suggested by the Ministry of H calth. There were no outbreaks of infectious diseases in the District during the year.

After reaching a peak of 26.61 in 1947, the birth rate has fallen gradually each year since then, and in 1950 it was 18.07. This still compares favourably with the birth rate for the country as a whole. Otherwise the vital statistics show little change from those of the previous year.

I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their support, Mr. Lean and his assistants for their excellent cooperation, and the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the year.

I am,
Y our obedient Servant

R. H. WATSON.

STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1950

Area (Acres)	1,893
Population (Registrar General's estimate) 1950	22,630
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1950	5,929
Rateable value on 31st December, 1950	£133,041
Sum represented by a 1d. rate on 31st December, 1950	£ 530

In the following tables the figures in brackets represent the corresponding figures for the previous year.

Live Births

	Male		Female		Total	
Legitimate	204	(236)	189	(214)	393	(450)
Illegitimate	8	(11)	8	(6)	16	(17)
	212	(247)	197	(220)	409	(467)

Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 18.07 (20.89)

Comparative figure for England and Wales 15.8
Comparability factor for the District 0.98

Still Births 16 (11)

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live & still births) 39.12 (23.01)

Death Rate. Total number of deaths 290 (295)

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 12.77 (13.19)

Comparative figure for England and Wales 11.6
Comparability factor for the District 0.97

Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age)

Legitimate	11	(14)
Illegitimate	2	(-)
	13	(14)

Rate of all infants per 1,000 births 31.74 (30.00)
Rate for all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births 27.99 (31.11)
Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births 125.00 (Nil)

Other Deaths

Deaths from Malignant Neoplasms	48
Deaths from Measles	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough	-
Deaths from Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	1

Causes of Death during 1950.

Cause of Death	M	F	Total
All causes	149	141	290
1. Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	7	4	11
2. Other forms of tuberculosis	1	1	2
3. Syphilitic disease	-	-	-
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping Cough	-	-	-
6. Meningococcal infection	-	-	-
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	-	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	1	-	1
10. Malignant neoplasm of stomach	5	2	7
11. Malignant neoplasm of lung, bronchus	6	-	6
12. Malignant neoplasm of breast	-	5	5
13. Malignant neoplasm of uterus	-	1	1
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	16	13	29
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16. Diabetes	-	3	3
17. Vascular lesions of the nervous system	17	20	37
18. Coronary disease and angina	15	7	22
19. Hypertension with heart disease	5	2	7
20. Other heart diseases	23	46	69
21. Other circulatory diseases	4	5	9
22. Influenza	-	-	-
23. Pneumonia	4	4	8
24. Bronchitis	8	4	12
25. Other diseases of respiratory system	6	2	8
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	-	-	-
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	1	1
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	1	2	3
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	8	-	8
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	1	1
31. Congenital malformations	-	-	-
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	17	15	32
33. Motor vehicle accidents	-	1	1
34. All other accidents	3	-	3
35. Suicide	1	1	2
36. Homicide and operations of war	1	1	2

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable diseases that occurred in the Borough during 1950. The table is drawn up after making the necessary corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioners or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals.

Disease	Total No. of Cases
Dysentery	1
Scarlet Fever	24
Whooping Cough	33
Measles	3
Acute Poliomyelitis	7
Erysipelas	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	1
	72

The incidence of notifiable infectious diseases shows a considerable decrease from that of the previous year. The incidence of infantile paralysis throughout the Country as a whole again rose sharply and because of increased prevalence in neighbouring areas it was recommended in September that operations for the removal of tonsils and adenoids, and routine dental extractions, should be postponed except in cases of urgency. Corrected figures for other parts of the County are not at present available, but it is probable that compared with other areas, the Borough was relatively lightly affected. Restrictions on operations of the upper respiratory tract were removed in December.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year.

Aged under 5 years	Aged 5 - 15 years	Total
171	79	250

The method of protection commonly in use is to give each child two immunising injections at the age of one year, and a third reinforcing injection early in school life. The reinforcing injection is most important to ensure protection during the early school years, and 102 such injections were given during the year. In addition 24 children under the age of one year completed a course of immunisation with a combined diphtheria and whooping cough vaccine.

Following the epidemic of infantile paralysis in 1947, study of cases which occurred in London showed in some cases a possible relation between immunising injections and localisation of paralysis. In a small number of cases, children who developed infantile paralysis and who showed maximum paralysis in one limb were found to have had an injection in that limb during the preceeding few weeks. It was considered possible that the small amount of tissue damage which follows intramuscular injection may have been a precipitating, or localising factor in an existing, or subsequent infection with infantile paralysis virus. The relationship, if any, is not quite clear and is at present the subject of thorough investigation by the Ministry of Health.

However, in the light of existing knowledge, it was decided to stop diphtheria immunisation last autumn and this is reflected in a reduction in the number of children under the age of five years who were immunised, as compared with the previous year.

Tuberculosis

There were 37 cases of respiratory and 5 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. The figure for respiratory cases is 4 less than the previous year.

Scabies

Very few cases have come to the notice of the H calth Department during the year.

Verminous Conditions

The Cleansing Centre at 60 High Street was closed on the 30th June, 1950. In future any cases requiring cleansing, and which are the responsibility of the Council will be treated at the new Cleansing Centre opened by the County Council at the Health Centre, Mount Street, Bridgwater.

Distribution of Meat

Following representation to the Ministry of Food during the previous year, there has been an improvement in the conditions under which meat is delivered to retailers in the District, and this improvement has been maintained, although conditions are not yet such as to be considered entirely satisfactory.

National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47

This Section of the Act enables Local Authorities to apply to Court for an Order to secure the care of persons who by reason of infirmity, old age or other conditions, are unable to care for themselves and are not receiving from other people proper care and attention, and who are living in insanitary conditions. Several cases were dealt with, but in only one case was it found necessary to proceed for a Court Order. This was the case of a woman aged 85 years who lived by herself and who was, for some considerable time, unable adequately to look after herself or her house. Shortly before the case came to the notice of the Health Department she had had a heart attack and as a result she was then completely unable to help herself and was in fact unable to leave her chair from which she flatly refused, at any time, to be moved. Despite the dreadful condition of the woman and the house and a heavy infestation with fleas, neighbours gave all possible help. No relatives could be found, and eventually application was made to Court for an Order to remove the woman to hospital, but she died before the case could be heard.

Welfare of Old People

The Council considered Ministry of Health circular 11/50 dealing with the Welfare of Old People and as a result, following a public meeting of all interested organisations, convened by His Worship the Mayor, the Bridgwater Old Peoples Welfare Committee has been founded. The chief function of the Committee is to organise, through its constituent voluntary bodies, an effective voluntary home visiting service and to co-ordinate its work with that of various statutory agencies concerned. The duties of the visitors include helping the old people with their shopping, obtaining books from libraries, letter writing, mending and generally solving minor domestic difficulties. H ome visiting of this kind has been shown to be of particular value, for it can

mitigate the sense of isolation and loneliness often experienced by old people.

Factories Act, 1937 & 1948.

The following particulars indicate the action taken under Part 1 of the Factories Act, 1937.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of		
		Insps.	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	62	10	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	71	33	-	-
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out workers' premises)	-	-	-	-
Total	133	43	-	-

	No. of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Insp.	Referred By H.M Insp.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	2	1			
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	1			1	
(b) Unsuitable or defective	3	3		3	
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act (Not including offences relating to Outwork)					
Total	6	4		4	

Nature of Work	No. of out-workers in Aug. list required by Sect. 110(1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Prosecutions
Wearing apparel (making)	71	-	-	-	-

Housing

The following table shows the progress made during the year:-

	Houses erected during year		Houses in course of erection		Conversion to flats or dwellings		Temporary such as Army Huts etc
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	150	-	138	-	-	-	-
Private Enterprise	26	-	9	-	-	-	-
Total	176	-	147	-	-	-	-

Houses required

(a) To replace those unfit 304
(b) To abate overcrowding 45
(c) Where conditions are unsatisfactory e.g. two families living in same house, but not included in (a) or (b) Nil

Total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year 1,367

Houses occupied that have been condemned as totally unfit 3

No. of houses found overcrowded 3

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

1. Water Supply

Regular bacteriological examinations have been made of both the raw water and the water going into supply.

Results were as follows:-

Ashford Reservoir

Untreated Water. Four samples were examined, all of which showed evidence of contamination.

Water after treatment. Ten samples were examined and all but one gave excellent results.

Durleigh Reservoir

Untreated Water. Five samples were examined, all of which showed evidence of contamination.

Water after treatment. Eleven samples were taken and all but one gave excellent results.

Arrangements have been made to ensure that all persons working in connection with the water supply are medically examined before commencing their duties. All possible steps are taken to exclude carriers of the enteric group of fevers.

2. Swimming Baths

Supervision has been maintained over the condition of the water in the swimming baths. Samples of the water from both baths have been submitted for bacteriological examination and have given only fair results.

The existing method of sterilisation is extremely crude and cannot be compared with the filtration and chlorination plants which exist in modern swimming baths.

3. Sanitary Inspection of the Area

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1950

TO:
The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Bridgwater

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1950. This report is still of necessity very curtailed.

Complaints

During the year 173 complaints were received and dealt with under the Public Health or Housing Acts, and in addition there were 130 complaints of rat infestation. This is a slight decrease on the figures for 1949.

In 21 cases Statutory Notices were served but in no instance was it necessary to take legal proceedings.

Housing

192 houses were inspected for the purpose of having housing defects remedied whilst 7 houses were systematically inspected under the Housing Regulations. No Demolition Orders were made but 10 houses the subject of Demolition Orders in 1948 were demolished during the year. Undertaking not to use the houses for human habitation were given in respect of two houses.

The improvement in the supply of labour and materials available for the repair of existing houses has been maintained, as is shown by the amount of repair work shown in the schedule at the end of the report.

Overcrowding

Only 5 cases of overcrowding were abated during the year, a decrease of 3 as compared with 1949. 41 inspections were carried out for the purpose of ascertaining if overcrowding existed and 3 new cases were found. The number of known cases remaining unabated at the end of the year was 43. No systematic inspections were carried out during the year, however, and the number of actual cases must be greatly in excess of the number known. The acute shortage of housing accommodation makes the abatement of overcrowding very difficult, especially in cases where the actual number of persons is only slightly in excess of the permitted number.

Verminous Premises

The number of houses found to be verminous was 7, a decrease on the figure for 1949.

Meat and Foods

Under the Government Scheme slaughtering is carried out at Weston-super-Mare, and, therefore, the only meat inspection is that of pigs for home consumption, casualties and the inspection of meat at butchers' shops.

A large quantity of other foods has been condemned and in this connection over 250 visits have been paid to grocers and similar shops. The following is a list of food condemned.

Beef	8 cwt.	
Wet Fish	3 cwt.	7 lbs.
Sweetened Fat	1 cwt.	85 lbs.
Sugar		66 lbs.
Canned Fish	251 Tins	
Canned Meat	583 Tins	
Canned Fruit	311 Tins	
Canned Vegetables	559 Tins	
Canned Soup	23 Tins	
Canned Milk	357 Tins	
Fish and Meat Paste	5 Jars	
Pickles and Sauces	190 Jars	
Jam	77 Tins	
Bacon	3 cwt.	18½ lbs.
Cheese		
Dried Fruit		50 lbs.
Sausages		41 lbs.
Orange Pulp	6 Tons	3 cwt.
Orange Peel		3 cwt.
Other Foods	2 cwt.	84 lbs.

Dairies and Milkshops

The number of persons retailing milk in the Borough is now 28, whilst there are 14 dairies. This is a decrease of one retailer on last years figures.

The quantity of Graded milk sold in the Borough is still increasing, there being 9 retailers selling Tuberculin Tested milk and 1 selling Pasteurised Milk

56 samples of Graded milk were examined during the year and all but one were satisfactory.

Ice-Cream

The number of premises registered for the manufacture or sale of ice-cream is as follows:-

Registered for manufacture and sale	9
Registered for sale only	45
TOTAL	54

The above figures are, however, somewhat misleading as only in 4 cases is the manufacture of ice-cream being carried out. There has been a further increase in the amount of wrapped ice-cream sold, with a consequent decrease in the quantity of "loose" ice-cream.

70 samples of ice-cream were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year and these were provisionally graded as follows:-

Grade 1 38, Grade 2 14, Grade 3 5, Grade 4 5.

Not examined 8.

These results are a great improvement on those obtained in 1949.

Rats and Mice Destruction Act.

The sytematic destruction of rats and mice is carried out satisfactorily. There are two fully trained Rodent Operators on the staff and the system of block control is being operated.

Two maintenance treatments of the sewers were carried out with excellent results and the Refuse Tip received regular attention.

Staff.

Mr. N.C.M. Pitman, Additional Sanitary Inspector left in April to take up an appointment at Cheltenham and the vacancy was filled by Mr. C.W. Richards of Leicester. It was a matter for deep regret that Mr. Pitman was taken seriously ill soon after leaving Bridgwater and passed away in the early Autumn.

Summary

Inspections made during the year

General Sanitation

Water Supply	36
Drainage	181
Stables and Piggeries	13
Houses let in lodgings	5
Factories	45
Rats and Mice	209
Shops	114
Inns	86
Swimming Baths	68
Public Conveniences	113
Smoke	208
Miscellaneous	156

Housing

Houses inspected under Public Health Acts	192
Visits paid to the above houses	995
Houses inspected under Housing Acts	7
Visits paid to the above houses	49
Houses inspected in connection with overcrowding	41
Visits paid to the above houses	48
Verminous premises inspected	11
Visits paid to the above premises	13
Miscellaneous	22

Infectious Diseases

Inquiries in cases of Infectious Diseases	16
Visits re disinfection	2
Miscellaneous	4

Meat and Food Inspections

Visits to Slaughterhouses	41
Visits to Shops and Stalls	19
Visits to other premises for meat inspection	15
Visits to Butchers	43
Visits to Fishmongers and Poulterers	14
Visits to Grocers	158

Visits to Greengrocers and Fruiterers	3
Visits to Confectioners	2
Visits to Bakehouses	19
Visits to Fried Fish Shops	11
Visits to Dairies and Milkshops	30
Visits to Ice-cream premises	94
Visits to Restaurants	15
Visits to Food Preparing premises	14
Miscellaneous	53

Explosives

Visits in connection with explosives	30
Visits in connection with Petroleum Spirit	2

Work Done

Complaints investigated	173
Rat complaints investigated	130
Choked Drains and Sewers cleared	30
Drains relaid	6
Drains or Sewers repaired	16
New Drainage laid	4
Inspections chambers provided	9
Soil Vent Pipes repaired	2
Defective ceilings repaired	57
Defective chimneys repaired	20
Defective doors repaired	19
Defective eavesgutters and downpipes repaired	34
Defective firegrates and ranges repaired	25
Defective floors repaired	40
Defective flushing cisterns repaired or renewed	16
Defective handrails repaired	1
Defective plastering repaired	102
Defective roofs repaired	61
Defective scullery troughs repaired or renewed	25
Defective scullery wastepipes repaired	10
Defective staircases repaired	6
Defective urinals repaired	2
Defective walls repaired	31
Defective washhouses repaired	2
Defective washing coppers repaired	2
Defective water closets repaired	22
Defective windows repaired	37
Defective yard paving repaired	1
Dampness remedied	12
Ceilings whitened	49
Rooms distempered or papered	49
Sashcords renewed	18
Cold water supply provided	6
Hot water supply provided	15
Flushing cisterns provided	5
Lavatory Basins provided	2
Scullery troughs provided	11
Urinals provided	3
Water closets provided	5
Additional windows or ventilators provided	8
Overcrowding abated	5
Verminous premises cleansed	7
Premises disinfested from rats or mice	102
Premises cleansed	2
Other nuisances abated	7

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

R. K. LEAN,

Chief Sanitary Inspector.